

Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Program Receives Transformational \$10 Million Grant From Eric And Wendy Schmidt

Monterey, Calif. (February 19, 2015) - The renowned [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) has received a \$10 million gift from [Eric and Wendy Schmidt](#) supporting the growing international scope of the aquarium's leadership in shifting the global seafood supply chain in more sustainable directions.

With the grant, the aquarium will be able to expand collaborations with food industry leaders, expert bodies and key NGOs to transform the way seafood is caught and farmed worldwide.

Since its inception as a consumer-based program in 1999, the aquarium's [Seafood Watch](#) program has become the most respected source of science-based information about sustainable seafood for major North American buyers and - increasingly - for international colleagues in business, government and the NGO sector as well.

The five-year grant will allow the aquarium to integrate the markets-based work of the Seafood Watch program with its policy and research expertise to address growing challenges in global fisheries and in aquaculture production far beyond U.S. shores.

As part of the effort, the grant will allow the Seafood Watch program to work more effectively on urgent global seafood challenges - notably by engaging with leading foodservice companies, international certification bodies and major seafood consuming nations, and by advancing seafood traceability to enable buyers to be confident in carrying out their commitments to purchase more seafood from sustainable sources and to reward better performing fishing and aquaculture practices. This work will rely on science-based conservation criteria and market incentives to shift seafood production worldwide in more sustainable directions.

"We have made remarkable progress in the last few years, changing perceptions and practices among business and the public," said aquarium Executive Director [Julie Packard](#). "While we've seen tremendous progress in recovery of U.S. fisheries, so much more needs to be done globally to ensure food security and healthy oceans for the future. It's gratifying to have our successes recognized by the Schmidts. With their support, we will now be able to accomplish so much more."

"For more than 15 years, the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Program has led the way in providing critical, science-based information about our seafood population so businesses and consumers across North America can choose seafood that has been fished or farmed in a way that protects sea life and their habitats," said Wendy Schmidt, co-founder with her husband of [The Schmidt Family Foundation](#) and [The Schmidt Ocean Institute](#). "Eric and I are delighted to provide the resources that will allow the Seafood Watch program to expand internationally, and help ensure that fisheries across the world have access to the kind of information that will allow them to employ practices that protect the health of our oceans."

The Schmidt Family Foundation advances the development of renewable energy and the wiser use of natural resources and houses its grant-making operation in [The 11th Hour Project](#), which supports more than 150 nonprofit organizations in program areas including climate and energy, ecological agriculture, human rights, and our maritime connection.

In 2009, the Schmidts created the Schmidt Ocean Institute (SOI), and in 2012 launched the research vessel, Falkor, as a mobile platform to advance ocean exploration, discovery, and knowledge, and catalyze sharing of information about the oceans.

In keeping with the couple's commitment to ocean health issues, Mrs. Schmidt has partnered with XPRIZE to sponsor the \$1.4 million Wendy Schmidt Oil Cleanup XCHALLENGE, awarded in 2011, and the [Wendy Schmidt Ocean Health XPRIZE](#), a prize that will respond to the global need for better information about the process of ocean acidification. It will be awarded this year.

Over the years the Monterey Bay Aquarium team has [led the sustainable seafood movement](#) and is today counted on by culinary experts, decision-makers, major businesses and public agencies to provide rigorous scientific data and policy guidance to shift fishing and aquaculture practices in sustainable directions.

With support from Eric and Wendy Schmidt, the aquarium will "take advantage of a unique moment in time to bring our ocean conservation programs to a new level of impact," Packard said. "I'm confident we'll be able to accelerate progress in changing the way people and businesses view their seafood and use what we know about global fisheries and aquaculture to transform the marketplace."

The mission of the nonprofit Monterey Bay Aquarium is to inspire conservation of the oceans.